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U.S. Serial No. 10/813,934
Atty Docket: 25424A**REMARKS****Status of Claims**

Claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23-34 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23-34 stand rejected. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following amendments and remarks.

Objection to Claim 1

Claim 1 stands objected to because the Office states that the word "for" appears to have been inadvertently inserted before "composition" in line one of the claim.

Applicants have deleted the word "for" before the word "composition". Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claim 1 be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) – Kroesbergen, Manning et al., Gaa et al., or Cossement et al.

Claims 1 and 6-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Kroesbergen, Manning et al., Gaa et al., or Cossement et al. for the reasons cited in the previous action. Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify that the composition is "free of crosslinking agents". Neither Kroesbergen, Manning et al., Gaa et al., nor Cossement et al. teach or suggest compositions free of crosslinking agents. No new matter has been added and support for the amendment can be found in the specification at page 14, lines 12-13. The original claim stated that the composition was autocatalytic, i.e., "self-crosslinking". In view of this, no further searching so deemed to be required. Applicants respectfully request that the amendment be entered.

Claims 6-15 ultimately depend from newly amended claim 1. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 6-15 be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 2, 4, 5 and 16-21 and 23-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, 35 U.S.C. 03(a) as being unpatentable over Kroesbergen, Manning et al., Gaa et al., or Cossement et al. for the reasons cited in the previous action.

Claims 1 and 16 have been amended to clarify that the composition, as claimed, is free of crosslinking agents. Referring to the arguments presented above with regard to the cited prior art, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action does not meet the criteria for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the applied reference must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. Further, the fact that the claimed invention is within the capabilities of one of ordinary skill in the art is not sufficient by itself to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness without some objective reason to combine the teachings of the references. See MPEP §2143.

Claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arroyo et al., or Geusen et al. in combination with Barch et al. for reasons cited in the previous action.

Arroyo et al. do not teach or suggest "an autocatalytic aqueous solution of water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor" as Applicants claim (claims 1 and 16). See Applicants' description at page 15, paragraph 2. Arroyo et al. specifically teach impregnating yarn with a superabsorbent material. Arroyo et al. teach that cross-linking of the polymer may be accomplished with a multivalent cation, radiation or with a cross-linking agent (col. 5, lines 11-13).

Barch et al. teach a multilayered mat having two layers. One of the layers is a glass fiber layer. The glass fibers are coated with a chemical treatment containing a film forming polymer and a coupling agent (see col. 5 to col. 7, line 31).

Because neither Arroyo et al. nor Barch et al. teach or suggest all of Applicants' claim limitations, *prima facie* case of obviousness cannot be established.

Geursen et al. teach a water-in-oil emulsion, the superabsorbent being present in the emulsion's aqueous phase. The continuous oil phase of the emulsion comprises liquids which are immiscible or poorly miscible with water such as linear, branched and cyclic hydrocarbons (see col. 3 lines 53-68 to col. 4, lines 6-16).

Applicants claim "an aqueous precursor composition" (claim 1, in part) and "an article having a superabsorbent polymer comprising a) a cellulosic article; b) an autocatalytic aqueous precursor composition" (claim 16, in part). Nowhere do Geursen et al. teach or suggest an aqueous composition, as Applicants claim.

Claims 2, 4, 4-15, 17-21 and 23-34 ultimately depend from newly amended claim 1 or claim 16. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the prior art, either separately or combined, teach Applicants' claimed invention. As such, a

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prima facie case of obviousness cannot be established in view of the applied prior art.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23-34 clearly define over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-21 and 23-34 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

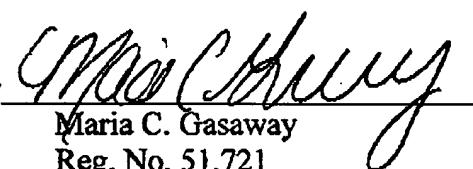
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-2, 4-21 and 23-34 are allowable. The Office is invited to telephone the Applicants' undersigned agent at (740) 321-7213 if any unresolved matters remain.

If any questions should arise with respect to the above Remarks, or if the Office has any comments or suggestions to place the claims in better condition for allowance, it is requested that the Office contact Applicants' agent at the number listed below.

Applicants authorize any fees required pertaining to this response be charged to Deposit Account 50-0568.

Respectfully submitted,
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